



Ex Libris
JOHN AND MARTHA DANIELS

1937

Sat February 20th Bendennis (for B. & C.)

Second by a distance from winner (rain broke)
University Challenge White Colterham Steeplechase

Monday February 25th Bathe's Folly.

1st by 9 lengths.

Open Nominations Race Hares P. P Colterham

Wednesday May 5th Bathe's Folly

1st by $\frac{1}{2}$ length

Open Nominations Light Weight Challenge Cup

To commemorate a very gallant performance

1936

H.T.N

Bachelors Folly
Thursday February 27th

Harris Point to Point, Cottenham

Adjacent Hunts Race. 2nd by 3 lengths from winner.

Saturday April 25th ditto

Purford ~~Hunt~~ Point to Point

Open nomination Race. 1st by 12 lengths

Saturday May 2nd ditto

Burford Steeple chases.

Light Weight Race. Open nomination

1st by 5 lengths.

Saturday May 2nd

20 guinea Hurdle Race

Ban Dennis. Won by a distance.

As some of these verses originally appeared in *Cosmopolis*, the Author's thanks are due to the Editor for his kindness in granting permission for their re-publication.

HUNTERS' MOON

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

— Illustrated by LIONEL EDWARDS —

SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND

By EDWIN C. ROBERTS

GALLOPING SHORE

By WILFRED OGILVIE

SCATTERED SCARLET

By WILFRED OGILVIE

OVER THE GRASS

By WILFRED OGILVIE

A HANDFUL OF LEATHER

By WILFRED OGILVIE

SPORTING SONGS AND VERSES

By G. J. WYATT-MELVILLE

HUNTING SONGS

By R. E. EGERTON WARBURTON

HUNTING THE FOX

By LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROUKE

SPORTING VERSE

By ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

— Illustrated by G. D. ARMOUR —

THE SPORT OF OUR ANCESTORS

By LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROUKE



HUNTERS' MOON.

HUNTERS' MOON

AND

OTHER HUNTING VERSES

By CAPTAIN EDRIC G. ROBERTS

WITH

EIGHT PLATES IN COLOUR

By GILBERT HOLLIDAY

LONDON

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TO G.

*As a remembrance of early starts,
Slippery roads and the traffic queued;
Finding a way through unknown parts,
Wearisome waits in the wind and rain,
Few of the pleasures were yours to gain—
Only the debt of my gratitude.*

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HUNTERS' MOON

THE horizon, sapphire and amethyst,
Pales in the East and soon,
Like a copper shield through the evening mist,
Rises the Hunters' Moon.

On the turnpike road every hoof-beat sounds
Clear in the frosty air,
As the Whip jogs home with the straggler-hounds
Jostling his weary mare.

They were bustling cubs in the woods until
Late in the afternoon,
When the pack divided and ran to kill,
Under the rising moon.

Now the shadows deepen as daylight dies ;
Brighter the moonbeams grow ;
And the branches gleam where the hoar-frost lies
Whiter than winter snow.

From the distant woods, looming softly dark,
There where the mists are strewn,
Comes the high-pitched note of a fox's bark
Baying the Hunters' Moon.

RIOT

SOMEHOW, I honestly never knew why,
Rarity, Chorister, Landlord and I
Found ourselves happily hunting alone,
Running like smoke on a line of our own ;
Maybe our keenness had led us astray
In the endeavour to get well away ;
Maybe the intricate maze of the wood
Helped us to lose ourselves more than we should ;
Either, or both, you can easily see,
Thus, might account for our innocent spree.
Also we felt quite a laudable pride
Hearing our voices resound far and wide,
Waking the echoes like three-season hounds,
(Really and truly mere puppy-like sounds,)
Loudly proclaiming the way he had gone,
None of us knowing what line we were on.
Who would consider a small thing like that
In the excitement of going ' full bat ' ?
Not for a moment did one of us think
Anything wrong with the very strong ' stink,'
Only it filled us with hatred and rage,
Just as it should do with pups of our age ;
Nothing else mattered to our youthful wits
But the desire to pull him to bits.

Judge of our horror and wide-eyed surprise,
Just as we 'd run to a view of our prize,
When, from the trees which were sheltering him,
Who should appear but that horrid boy Jim ;
' Landlord,' he shouted, and ' Chorister,' too.
' Rarity, blast yer. 'Ware riot, and you.'
This, I may say, was directed at me,
Followed up quickly, before I could see,
By a superbly timed cut of his whip
Which, with a crack, caught me full on the hip.

Sadly, but wisely, we gave up the chase,
Wistfully hastening our steps to retrace,
Chivvied and rated by Jim the whole way,
(Which, after all, was a cad's trick to play).
Only to find, when we safely got back,
Nothing but chaff from the rest of the pack ;
Rather, indeed, was it something like spite,
Judged by their efforts to worry and bite.

Never again shall we hunt our own line,
Rarity's, Chorister's, Landlord's or mine.

WORDS OF WISDOM

' Now listen, my son,' the old vixen said,
' You 're reckless and bold, but your coat is red,
And every one 's out for your graceless head,
So take my advice and be warned in time,
Before you embark on your life of crime,
And learn to be wise in your ways, instead.

' In Summer and Spring you can romp and play,
Enjoying your freedom as best you may,
With never a care, either night or day,
Except for the man with the loaded gun,
And snares where the rabbits are wont to run ;
But only a fool would be caught that way.

' It 's Autumn and Winter that prove the test
Of all you were taught at your mother's breast ;
And many a fox who thought life a jest,
Or proudly, to cunning, refused to stoop,
Has ended his days to a quick " Who-whoop " ;
So always remember that I know best.

' And these are the things you must bear in mind :
For every look forrard, look twice behind ;
And never fall foul of your friend, the Wind ;
Trust no one at all till he 's proved his worth ;
But always keep in with old Mother Earth,
For friends are too few in this life, you 'll find.

' But when you are running before the pack,
And everything 's failed and the future 's black,
Run straight as you can, with no turning back,
And die as your gallant old father died,
For his was a glorious end,' she sighed,
' Which only the bravest may gain, alack.'

THE WANDERERS

We who have travelled the old world over,
Seeking no respite but doomed to roam,
Bound to the life of an aimless rover,
Know what it means to call England ' Home.'

Days in the dust with the hot sun burning,
Nights that bring nothing but stifling heat ;
Winter at home, and our hearts are yearning—
Oh, to be there for the Opening Meet !

Snow on the hills and a wind that freezes,
Inches of ice on the Frontier pass ;
Winter at home where November pleases—
Oh, for a day on the Downland grass !

Rain and the paddy-fields' desolation,
Reeking with fever the sultry air ;
Winter at home full of expectation—
Oh, to be starting the season there !

Some day, perhaps, in the distance seeming,
We shall return, if the gods are good,
Back to the things which have set us dreaming
All through the years of our vagrant-hood.



DIANA

In the summer you 'll see her at most of the shows,
And admire her turn-out and her air of repose,
As she sits in the saddle, a model of grace,
With a pleasing and confident smile on her face,
And you 're ready to swear, as she shows off her
horse,
That a First is her due, as a matter of course.

In the Autumn she 's out in a trim covert-coat,
With a Beaufort-blue tie round her dainty young
throat,
And you 'll notice she sees what each puppy is at,
From beneath the short brim of her little felt hat,
With the same charming look in her pretty blue eyes
Which, in June, had compelled you to give her First
Prize.

In November she 's there, at the opening-day meet,
As delightful as ever and terribly neat
From her shiny top-hat to a flashing steel spur,
Every detail correct (you 'd expect it of her),
With her chestnut a picture of masterly care,
And you know the First Flight will claim *them* as a
pair.

THE OPENING MEET

THE normally sleepy-eyed village street
This morning is gaily alive,
For every one 's out for the Opening Meet
And watching the people arrive ;
Invariably first is the dealer's string
Of sober and workmanlike quads,
And into the square they sedately swing
To intimate greetings and nods.

Then two or three farmers on short-tailed cobs
Come trotting compactly along,
And, tossing their reins to the out-of-jobs,
Are lost in the talkative throng ;
While soon a collection of girls and boys,
On ponies of different breeds,
Arrives with a clatter of childish noise
And boastings of last season's deeds.

Some grooms from the barracks come two by two,
And others from houses near by,
With good-looking horses, of which a few,
As thoroughbreds, leap to the eye ;

And several more farmers and tradesmen, too,
Ride up with their sisters and wives,
While closely behind, on his chestnut screw,
The heavy-weight doctor arrives.

Then sounds of excitement grow swiftly loud,
And voices are raised, here and there,
Announcing to all the expectant crowd
That hounds have arrived in the square ;
And, over the heads of the people, gleam
The pink of the hunt-servants' coats ;
Behind them, again, comes a moving stream
Of cars which the gentry denotes.

The Master steps out of his ancient Ford
And mounts his old thoroughbred bay,
And cheerily nodding to groom or lord
Proceeds to move slowly away ;
While every one follows to Hangman's Wood,
The covert which always provides
A fox which will break as a good fox should—
In spite of the yells from all sides !

HARTWORTH VALE

WHEN, each new season, your eager eyes
Look their first down the far-flung vale,
Your heart stands still with a nameless thrill,
As all its beauty before you lies,
Reaching out to the mist-blue veil
Of trees and woods and the distant sea ;
Miles of galloping English grass
Which, once again, to the hunting men
Are calling loud with a certainty
No one, ever, could lightly pass ;
And echoes stir through the pasture-lands,
Grazing cattle lift startled heads,
As, softly borne, sounds the hunting-horn
Where Jim, the huntsman, serenely stands
Waving hounds through the withy-beds.
And, stretched as far as the eye can see,
Wave on wave the green acres sail,
And well you know, when the bitches go,
It 's racing hard with the best you 'll be
All the length of the Hartworth Vale.



THE SECOND WHIP

OVER he goes, with a crash and a rattle,
Hound-couples clinking, 'gainst saddle and thigh ;
Over he goes, and the light of the battle
Gleams like a spark in his eager young eye.

Twigs of the hawthorn fly backward together,
Meeting again with an ominous swish ;
Over he goes, landing light as a feather,
One with his horse and quick as you 'd wish.

Kinds and conditions of fences don't matter,
Straight as a ramrod he rides at them all ;
Over he goes, with a bang and a clatter,
Knocking loose stones off the top of the wall.

Bullfinch and ditch and the rest are no trouble,
Nor is a bank, for the matter of that ;
Over he goes, on and off the big double,
Timed to a fraction and neat as a cat.

Added to these are the rails and the water ;
Timber he loves, but the brook is a care ;
Over he goes, with a yard and a quarter,
Fully a yard and a quarter, to spare !

FOG

THE Captain and I were jogging along
One foggy November morning,
With fingers and toes which didn't belong,
Although we were bravely scorning
To notice the fact as well as we could,
And no one would really blame us,
For hounds were to meet at Brackley Wood,
A covert that 's justly famous.

We shortly came up with riders in front
Dejectedly bunched together,
Who doubted if hounds could possibly hunt
In this sort of hopeless weather ;
But we, in a cheerful, frivolous way,
Refused to become down-hearted,
And said we were sure of quite a good day,
Provided the Master started.

Then soon, through the fog, we joyfully saw
The pack going on before us,
And said that we, now, would certainly draw
And find to a rousing chorus ;
Which happened exactly as we 'd foretold,
In spite of the bad conditions,
And most of us soon forgot to feel cold
In striving to keep positions.

For Reynard was up and gone like a flash
Before the field really knew it,
And into the wood, with plenty of dash,
Came hounds and were quickly through it,
Their beautiful cry flung back through the mist
Like bells in the distance clashing ;
A warning that few could hope to exist
For long without risk of crashing.

However, by dint of knowing by heart
The country the fox was running,
We managed to steal away at the start
And, aided by native cunning,
Succeeded in keeping close to the pack
Ten minutes or, maybe, longer,
But gradually, then, began to drop back,
The fog getting thickly stronger.

It soon became plainly evident that
We dared not push on much faster,
When, out of the murk as black as your hat,
Emerged our respected Master,
Who pulled up and asked which way they had gone
In tones that were grimly cheery ;
But what was the use of galloping on
When everything looked so dreary ?

And so we resignedly made for a lane
Which led in the right direction,
Although we felt sure our efforts were vain,
It saved our complete dejection,
For, after a bit, it seemed that the fog
Began to get faintly lighter,
Which helped us to change our desultory jog
To something a trifle brighter.

And then, in amazement, what should we hear
But hounds on a hot scent screaming ;
A sound which, indeed, came steadily near,
Till, over the roadway streaming,
They poured in a flood a furlong ahead,
A sight for the gods, endearing,
Which turned all our woes to rapture instead
As gaily we followed, cheering.

And over the fence we popped in a line,
Like jockeys in steeplechases,
And galloped like mad to try and confine
The fox to the open spaces ;
A move which was promptly crowned with success,
As, 'ere he had time to double,
They killed him in style,—the open, no less—
A five-acre field of stubble !

NEW SADDLES

It 's a curious thing that the saddle one chooses
With care in some opulent store
Never *feels* quite the same as the old 'uns one uses
And *has* used, for seasons, before.

I suppose it 's a matter of custom and liking
For things one has treasured for years,
Rather foolish, no doubt, but it 's true as a striking
Example of rigid ideas.

In addition, of course, there 's the question of whether
One's courage comes up to one's pride,
Plus the luck which depends on (they *all* hinge
together)
How well one is able to ride.

For to hunt in a saddle that 's new is unlucky,
It 's odds on one 's taking a toss ;
If one *doesn't* come off, one 's not clever or plucky,
But merely a victim of ' joss !'

THE LITTLE GREY VIXEN

I MUST tell you of Christopher Roddy,
Who was Master, for years, on our side ;
He had broken most bones in his body,
But, by Jingo, he knew how to ride !
And he hunted his hounds well and truly,
And could kill a good fox with the best,
But the little grey vixen from Beaully,
From the first, had him fully impressed.

She appeared at the start of one season,
In about the tenth year of his reign,
And was marked then and there, and by reason
Of her colour, so hard to explain.
She was almost snow-white round the muzzle,
With her under-parts fading to grey,
And her origin, always a puzzle,
Remains still unravelled to-day.

As for pace there was nothing her equal,
While her cunning was something apart ;
But the strangest of all is the sequel
To the breaking of Christopher's heart.

This occurred, if I rightly remember,
In about his twelfth season, or so,
At the end of a spanking December
When he 'd shown us how hounds ought to go.

After that he grew bearish and surly
And uncertain in temper and ways,
Often taking out hounds very early
On un-advertised non-hunting days.
It was always the vixen he wanted,
Nothing else, for him, mattered a bit,
And it seemed he was constantly haunted
By his failure to cope with her wit.

Then, on one of these bye-days, he found her
Lying up in her usual place ;
With his cronies he tried to surround her,
But she mockingly broke in his face,
And went straight, without any pretences,
On the line which she always would take,
Knowing, only too well, that the fences
Were the stiffest a farmer could make.

For the best of the morning she led him
Down the length of the valley and back,
And, as though half-unwilling to shed him,
She just cantered in front of the pack,

So that noon saw him changing his horses
For the pick of his stable, a grey,
Which had won over steeplechase courses,
And was duly reputed to stay.

For another good hour she philandered,
Making rings around Kit and his hounds,
And, with fiendish delight, she meandered
Where the wire, like a bird-cage, abounds ;
Then, with scent on the sudden improving,
She elected her tactics to change,
And, increasing her pace, began moving
In the way which had ceased to be strange.

In a frenzy Kit charged at his fences,
Like a fury he shouted and swore,
And that now he was out of his senses
Was a fact which one couldn't ignore ;
In his madness he seemed unaware of
The distress of his gallant old grey,
Or that hounds had had more than their share of
The distinction of going all day.

In this state of blind hate and delusion,
And by taking his fences so fast,
It was plainly a foregone conclusion
That disaster must end things at last ;

As his riding grew wilder and rasher,
It was hardly surprising at all
When he came an imperial crasher
At a solid and sizeable wall.

He was dead when they picked him up, limply,
Having broken his neck on the spot,
While the grey's was a case of just simply
Being taken away to be shot.
But his efforts were duly rewarded,
For the pack struggled valiantly on,
And, with only three couple recorded,
Tore the vixen to pieces anon.

Now they say, when the moon 's at the quarter
In the earliest part of the year,
With the Will-o'-the-wisp on the water,
Many strange things at midnight appear :
First, the little grey vixen from Beaulieu
With a ghastly green light in her eye,
Then the pack and old Kit, gleaming blueely,
In a ghostly procession go by.

FOUND

THE fox was asleep and curled up like a ball
On top of the seven-foot boundary wall,
When, faint through the wood, came a note on the
 horn,
And, opening an eye with a flicker of scorn,
He flattened himself where the ivy was thick,
Secure in the certain success of his trick,
And grinned with derision on hearing the sound
Of William, the second whip, rating a hound.

But little he dreamed of the workings of fate,
For, just as he watched them go out through the gate,
A pheasant got up with a flurry and whirr,
And swung, like a rocket, down-wind to just where
The fox was already beginning to doze,
Content in the knowledge he 'd baffled his foes,
And turned with a fluster back into the wind,
Announcing, to all, the extent of its find.

A JANUARY DAY

NAKED branches etched against a limpid sky ;
Banks of fleecy clouds along the West ;
Dim and blue across the grass the shadows lie,
Like a lace-work pattern lightly pressed.

Silver sunlight striking slant-wise through the trees
Paints the ancient boles a greenish grey ;
Cobwebs, gleaming softly, float before the breeze,
Fairy-like they pause and dance away.

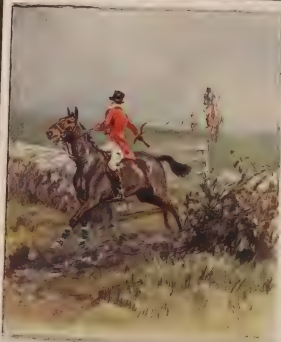
Ashen green the deer-park stretches up to where
Shaven lawns are thronged and gaily bright ;
Scarlet-coated horsemen hail another year,
Grouped around the pack of dappled white.

Bravely from the tree-tops comes a strident song,
Where the missel-thrushes greet the morn ;
While, below, the woodlands echo, loud and long,
Cheering voice and mellow hunting-horn.

GATES

GATES are a nuisance,
Gates are a curse,
Slamming behind you,
If nothing worse ;
Shutting so neatly
Right in your face,
Just when you 've tried to
Get a good place ;
Banging their hardest,
Crash on your knees,
When you were nipping
Through with a squeeze.

Gates are a pleasure,
Maybe a jest,
To the bold timber-
Topper, at best ;
But to the modest
People like us



GATES

27

Gates are a bother,
Gates are a fuss,
Padlocked or bolted,
Open or shut,
All represent the
Longest short-cut !

THE SQUIRE

IN the days of my youth, I distinctly remember,
He would drive to the meets in a yellow-wheeled cart
With a tandem of bays, from the first of November
To the end of the season,—exceedingly smart
And a joy to behold on a fine Winter's morning,
For both he and his horses were clearly clean bred,
And he looked a real sportsman, all subterfuge
scorning,
With his curly-brimmed hat on the side of his head.

When the War came along there was nobody keener
About doing one's duty for ' God and the Right,'
And his generous actions and modest demeanour
Were examples to all who were too old to fight,
For he promptly gave up all the things he was used to,
All his coaches and horses he solemnly sold,
And his stable of hunters was sadly reduced to
One forlorn little mare about fifteen years old.

In addition, his charming old house was converted
To an officers' hospital, cheery and bright,
While he calmly, and not in the least disconcerted,
Settled down in a cottage, which suited him quite,

■

As the best of our country was all round about him,
And he often came out on his flea-bitten mare ;
And I doubt if we 'd ever have got on without him
In those lean days of hunting, and worry and care ;

For his confident spirit was truly inspiring,
And he always would say it was the least they could
do,

Quite regardless how quickly his old bones were tiring,
To keep everything going, in spite of the few,
So that, some day, the youngsters out doing the
fighting

Should return and find all just the same as before ;
And, although it was never exactly exciting,
They contrived to keep going the whole of the War.

The result of all this, I don't hesitate saying,
Is to see the hunt flourishing now, as of old,
So it 's something to know that their efforts at playing
A most difficult game were rewarded four-fold ;
That the Squire is still hunting as gamely as ever,
Though he 's many years over the three score and ten,
Is to us, who 've come back from our war-like en-
deavour,
An assurance that everything 's normal again.

A BLANK DAY

THERE 's always one day in each season,
At least, when the fates are unkind
And, though we can't fathom the reason,
Refuse us the joy of a find.

Conditions are almost ideal,
The going as sound as a bell,
And everything else seems a real
Good galloping day to foretell.

And even when most of the morning
Has gone, and with nothing to show,
There 's no one who 'll venture the warning
That ' blank days do happen, you know.'

It 's certain that hope springs eternal
In every good fox-hunter's breast,
From school-boy to cavalry colonel,
Each joyfully hopes for the best.

However, the keenest must weary
In time, to be perfectly frank,
And force themselves still to be cheery
When *all* the best coverts are blank.

And blank are the less likely places
Which seldom, if ever, are drawn,
And blank is the look on our faces
As truth is beginning to dawn.

At length, with the darkness descending,
The last draw is made and in vain,
And ' home ' is the signal for ending
These things which we cannot explain.

But short-lived is every one's sorrow,
And laughter soon smothers a sigh,
For rumour declares that to-morrow
The Master is having a bye !

THE OLD PRINT

WHEN staying at the local inn
To hunt the fox from Adam's Whin,
I noticed, hung above the stair,
An old-world print of sporting air ;
A huntsman on a chestnut sails
Across gigantic post-and-rails,
And waves his whip above his head
As if they both were born and bred
To jump such fences all day long,
Without so much as *one* foot wrong.

One night while on my way to bed,
I met the landlord's son, who said,
' That picture, sir, you see up there,
Is my great-grand-dad's famous mare ;
Together they were known throughout
The whole of Yorkshire, round about,
And few can show such fine careers,
For he was huntsman thirty years
To old Sir John at Adam's Court,
And never failed to show good sport.'

A great deal more he told me, too,
Of all their deeds of derring-do,
And proved to me, with simple pride,
How well his forbears used to ride,
No modern horseman could compare.
But, even so, I stopped him there :
' Now don't you think a mare so small
At such a fence would surely fall ? '
He looked at me and shook his head,
And smiling slowly, naively said,
' Why no, sir, all the old folk tell
In all those years she never fell.'

Such simple faith is rare indeed,
And who was I to dare mislead
By asking questions mainly trite ?
And so I turned and said ' Good-night.'

BEST OF ALL

OF the pleasures in life which inspire and enthrall
With an evergreen passionate zest,
There is one which undoubtedly rivals them all
As the grandest, supremest and best.

It 's the feel of a hunter between your two knees,
And the rhythm of a blood-horse's stride,
With that smoothness of action and effortless ease
Which are part of his thoroughbred pride.

It 's the glorious sensation of confident pace,
The perfection of balance and poise,
And that freedom of movement and generous grace
Which his resolute spirit enjoys.

And when hounds are away and excitement's
intense
On a good-scenting, galloping day,
It 's the feel of your horse taking fence after fence
Without a mistake the whole way.



10 x 4 1/2

TOPS

I AM always intrigued by those fashionable shops
In the regions of Dover Street,
With their gallant display of immaculate ' tops '
Which resemble a *corps-d'élite* ;
And their dazzling perfection which seems to convince,
By its aristocratic air,
That their glories were obviously meant for a prince,
Or, at least, for a millionaire.

Their magnificent polish is something apart,
And their elegant slimness too,
While a crease on that surface would fracture your heart,
And a *speck* of dust turn you blue ;
But the choicest of all their entrancing delights
Are the colourful tops themselves,
Which may range from pale pink to mahogany lights,
As they stare from their haughty shelves.

Yet, out hunting, it 's always my chiefest complaint
That I rarely see boots like these,
And, instead, have to look at the shapeless and quaint
Which have seldom been *near* their trees.
After years of deep thought I have come to the root
Of the matter, which seems to be
That the number of men with a ' leg for a boot '
Is deplorably small, you see.

HOUNDS ARE RUNNING

HOUNDS are running up over the hill,
See them go, by the derelict mill,
Altogether, and hunting a treat ;
Not a doubt the proverbial sheet
 Would cover them now.

Hounds are running below in the vale,
See them go, where the grass-lands prevail,
Twenty couple together as one ;
Just a handkerchief, fluttered in fun,
 Would cover them now.

THE HUNT BALL

THE Master's house is a blaze of light,
For this is a 'great occasion' night,
And all the County is here in force
To dance as well as they ride a horse,
And chase the hours with their 'flying feet,'
Regardless, quite, of to-morrow's meet.

And lovely ladies who hunt the fox
Are sweeter still in their flimsy frocks,
Which mean the utmost of thought and care,
For, though the colours are strange and rare,
There 's never one, by a chance remote,
To clash with the red of a gay pink coat.

And men who seldom are seen at balls
Awake the echoes with hunting-calls,
And dance each waltz with a joyful zest
To old-world tunes which they know the best,
Or watch the youth from the supper-bar
Behind a glass and a long cigar.

Then, clocks proclaiming the early morn,
Some wag produces a hunting-horn,
And round the room to ' D'ye ken John Peel,'
They all go prancing with tireless zeal,
Before they scatter to home and bed ;
To meet, anon, with that ' hunt ball ' head !

A LAST DAY

RICHARD and Prudence were home together
Most of the Christmas holidays,
So it was hard, in the hunting weather,
Having to part and go their ways.

Richard was riding a polo pony,
Stylish and smart and rather fast ;
Prudence her little Welsh cob, called Tony,
Friend of her youth for ages past.

Meeting at Yarwell, we drew the planting
Up to the top, by Hunters' Lane ;
Found in the spinney, to sounds enchanting ;
Viewed him away across the grain.

Scent was inclined to be cold and catchy,
After a spell of dry east wind,
Making the run, on the whole, seem patchy,
'Spite of our quick and rousing find.

Nevertheless, we had lots of jumping,
Many a stirring gallop, too ;
Richard and Prudence serenely bumping
Over their fences, straight and true.

No one was really exactly sorry
When, in the end, they viewed him first ;
Ran him to earth in the disused quarry,
After a fast and final burst.

Richard and Prudence rode up together,
Beaming with youthful joy and pride ;
Watched the men digging and wondered whether
Reynard was safely tucked inside.

Later, however, they grinned with pleasure,
When they received, with charming blush,
Trophies to keep as a priceless treasure,—
Mask for young Dick, for Prue the brush.

COFFEE-HOUSING

GROUPED at the covert-side, talking and laughing,
Smoking cigars and their cigarettes too,
Gay irresponsibles, merrily chaffing,
Vie with each other the things they can do.

Some one will say that his horse is a corker,
Others declare that he hasn't a chance ;
Somewhere beyond, an inveterate talker
Tells of the doings at somebody's dance.

Hardly a soul seems to worry much whether
Hounds can be heard through the din and the chat,
Loudly they gossip in bunches together,
Sifting the details of this or of that.

Elders may stare with a stern disapproval,
Claiming such things were not done in their day ;
Call for the chatterers' instant removal,
'Ere, with a shrug, they turn grimly away.

Nevertheless, when a few seconds later
Echoes awake to the stir of a find,
Who 're away first and are riding the straighter ?
Who but the gossips,—they 're never behind !

THE MASK

As the bars of the sunset shimmer
In the smouldering Winter dusk,
There 's the hint of a sudden glimmer
And the gleam of a naked tusk
Where the mask, with its curled lips grinning,
As it flops at the saddle's side,
Marks the end of a sinner's sinning
And the sum of a huntsman's pride.

As the flames from the fireplace flicker
On the wall where the trophies hang,
And the shadows are leaping quicker,
There 's the glint of a naked fang
Where the mask, in its mounted glory,
Seems to grin with a scornful pride
At the often-repeated story
Of the day when a good fox died.



1000-1000

AN OLD-FASHIONED PACK

THOUGH they called themselves Harriers they hunted
the fox,

A level and lean-looking lot,
And were constantly giving adjoining hunts shocks
By runs which were notedly hot.

This was truly surprising and praiseworthy, too,
In view of the country they had,
For their coverts were scattered and painfully few,
While scent was notoriously bad.

But in spite of these drawbacks they went like the
wind,
And carried a beautiful head,
So at most of their meets you would probably find
The horses were mainly clean bred.

For you wanted a good one and one that could stay,
And jump every known kind of fence,
And a horse that was nippy at getting away,
With plenty of sound commonsense.

The result was the thrusters from neighbouring packs
Turned out in their hundreds, galore,
To compete with the locally hard-riding cracks
In keeping their place to the fore.

Who, regardless of visiting dandies in pink,
Invariably hunted in black,
And, while welcoming every one, gloried to think
That few ever lived with the pack.

For the country was not only trappy but vile,
Except for its galloping grass,
And it took a real horseman to ride it in style,
On horses of National class.

So, in spite of its popular steeplechase vein,
This light-coloured pack on our side
Will continue to add to its fame, and remain
A joy to the man who can ride.

HUNTING DIARIES

WHEN I 'm stationed abroad in some horrible spot,
With my leave many moons ahead,
And it 's sticky and damp and unbearably hot,
And it 's early to go to bed ;
When the Club is a menace and dancing a sham,
I contrive to amuse myself
By forgetting the present, wherever I am,
As I take from their crazy shelf
All the little red books I 've collected for years,
And reread them, each page by page,
Till I 'm lost in a dream as the past reappears
Like the ghosts of a bygone age,
And I live once again all those wonderful days
When I hunted the fox at home,
And am carried away in a make-believe haze
That I never again shall roam,
But am back in the country I love and adore,
For which no things out here atone,
And am galloping over the grass, as of yore,
On the horses I used to own.

OLD JOE

For a number of seasons he carried his master,
Doing three days a fortnight, or so,
And, although there were many much finer and faster,
There were few quite as clever as Joe ;
He could jump like a stag when occasion demanded,
And could creep where the big horses stuck,
While he often was up, with the rest of us stranded,
By his sheer perseverance and pluck.

In addition to all his achievements out hunting
Were his Point-to-point efforts each year,
When you 'd see him the Starter's flag calmly confronting,
Sometimes twice in one day, too, I fear ;
And all this, if you please, after driving a party
In a trap many miles to the fray,
Trotting homeward again, with all happy and hearty
At the end of their prosperous day.

Then the fashion of holding hunt-trials was started,
So, of course, we had ours like the rest,
And old Joe was brought over and gaily ' decarted,'
To compete in events with the best.

But before the first half of the course he'd completed,
And with never a fault up to date,
He was seen to come down (with what groans was
this greeted,)
In the open beyond, by the gate.

That his gallant old heart, which had triumphed for
seasons,
Should have failed him, at last, was our grief ;
That he died in his bridle was one of the reasons
Which shall always increase my belief
That devotion to duty, in humans, is splendid,
But in horses it's something sublime,
For it's little they claim when their labours are
ended
As reward, but the fulness of time.

Near the spot where he fell we have lately erected
To his memory a modest new gate,
(It was hewn from an oak, very old and respected,
Which was grown on the Master's estate,)
To remain as a token of gallantry, linking
The old days with the present, at most ;
And, out hunting, we never ride by without thinking
Of the hero who died at his post.

ROOKS

THERE he goes ! See, where the rooks are wheeling
And stooping to the ground ;
That 's a sure sign that a fox is stealing
Away before he 's found.

Round about, swirling in wild disorder,
They show the way he goes ;
Little chance, now, has the bold marauder
Of shaking off his foes.

All the way, clamouring loud, they follow
His course with grim discord ;
Till, at last, shouts and a shrill view-holloa
Proclaim their just reward.



A BYE-DAY

Not many people had heard that on Friday
Hounds were to meet at the Kennels at ten,
Having a quiet and business-like bye-day,
Out for the robber who 'd tricked us again.
Sharp to the minute the Master was mounted,
Settling the skirt of his oldest pink coat,
Calling each hound till the whole pack was counted,
Ere he moved off with a truculent note.

Gaily we followed, like so many lovers
Keeping a tryst, to the Bushes once more,
Beverly Bushes, most famous of coverts,
Where we had found him and lost him before ;
This time the Master was taking no chances,
Plainly he told us his plan of attack,
Left us exchanging significant glances
As he went forrard to throw in the pack.

Almost at once were our keen ears rewarded
By the glad sound of a whimper or two ;
Silence again our impatience defrauded,
Till, with a crash, they had found him we knew.

Faint through the Bushes came William's view-
holloa,

Reynard had chosen his favourite line ;
Yet must we wait before daring to follow,
Wait for the Master to give us his sign.

Hounds, we could hear, had gone through and were
running

Out in the vale with a beautiful cry ;
Then we awoke to old Benjamin's cunning,
Knew he had meant to slip off on the sly.
Far in the distance his horn faintly blowing
Came to our ears as his signal at last ;
Seconds too late,—we already were going,
Going like blazes and devilish fast.

Slap through the Bushes and down to the valley,
Racing like mad every yard of the way,
Till, just ahead, we espied him and Sally
Striding along, as they could do all day.
As we drew level, he turned his head, grinning :
' Thank you,' he shouted, ' for playing your part.
Most things depend on a proper beginning ;
All that I wanted was room at the start.'

This made us laugh and our anger departed,
No one could really be cross with old Ben,
Also we knew he disliked being thwarted—
Nothing should let his fox beat him again.
Sinking the valley we went without pausing,
Never so much as the hint of a check,
Pace and 'professional jealousy' causing
Plenty of grief and, for many, a trek.

Reynard, the artful old varmint, was setting,
Strongly as ever, his mask for the stream,
Knowing, full well, where he crossed meant a wetting.
If nothing worse, for the field, it would seem.
Some of us raced for the bridge by the station,
Only to find that the gate had been locked,
Others went straight for the ford with elation,
Shouting 'Ware wire' when they found it was
 blocked.

Only old Ben and a few of the thrusters
Charged at the water in honest cold blood ;
Horses and riders soon struggling in clusters—
Reynard had reckoned the stream was in flood.
Meanwhile the hounds were successfully over,
Shaking themselves on the opposite side,
Questing in vain for the 'little red rover,'
Scent had mysteriously suddenly died.

Sally soon floundered where she had started,
Bursting the girths with an ominous crack ;
Benjamin, cursing, but ever stout-hearted,
Hauled himself up in the midst of the pack.
William was playing his mare like a salmon,
Hooked by the reins on the end of his crop ;
Others indulged in a game of backgammon
Chasing loose horses which no one could stop !

Not a whit daunted old Ben began cheering,
Urging his hounds to get forrard and try,
Trudged through the marsh-lands and out to the
clearing,
Waking the woods with his wonderful cry.
Soon he was back again trying the reaches
Down by the ford, and the rushes below ;
Vainly he lifted them short of the beeches,
Drawing down-river a furlong or so.

Just when it seemed he was really defeated,
Hounds gave a whimper down there by the mill,
Paused to make sure they were not being cheated,
Then, in a chorus, gave tongue with a will.
Loudly Ben cheered them on, striving to follow
Over the marsh in his water-logged boots,
Blew them away to a far-distant holloa
Ere he gave up in an acre of roots.

William, by this, had succeeded in landing
Swallow, his mare, with the leathers both gone ;
Ran to the spot where the Master was standing,
Shouting, ' Here 's Swallow, for Gawd's sake get on.'
Benjamin, needing no two invitations,
Scrambled aloft, then, as fast as he could,
Shook up the mare and, with loud exhortations,
Soon disappeared in the depths of the wood.

We, who were left, turned our horses' heads sadly
Back to the road, where we clattered along,
Cursing the stream which had frightened us badly,
Keenly aware we were all in the wrong.
Better, by far, to have risked a mere wetting
Than to be stranded the wrong side to hounds ;
Missing good things is at all times upsetting—
This was a beauty, too, judging by sounds !

Later we heard the whole wonderful story,
How they had killed in the open at one,
Benjamin always alone in his glory,
Up with his hounds through the length of the run ;
Many 's the tale of that memorable Friday
Told by the people who saw him go by.—
Long shall we laugh over Benjamin's bye-day
When he and Swallow wiped every one's eye !

HUNTING FROM THE TRAIN

WHENEVER I travel by railway train,
Ensnorced, with luck, in a corner seat,
The engine facing,
I find myself hunting the fox again
Across the hedges and fields we meet,
And simply racing.

Whatever the country it's just the same,
The horse I ride is a super steed
And never failing ;
He's clever as fun and as game as game,
And over everything goes full speed,
Serenely sailing.

Whichever direction the fox may go,
He *always* runs by the railway line,
Yet quite untiring,
And through his adversities seems to know
Exactly how he can cut things fine,
In ways inspiring.

Wherever he goes so the pack goes too
As, hell-for-leather, without a check
 And never swerving,
They carry the line with a will all through,
From field to field, racing neck and neck,
 The pace preserving.

Whatever the length of the run may be,
My wonder horse is still up in front,
 The First Flight leading ;
And, thinking it over, it seems to me
I get more fun from my ' railway ' hunt
 Than lots of reading.

TINKER

BRIGHT-EYED, alert and exceedingly tough,
Tinker, the terrier, knows well enough
When it 's his turn things are bound to be rough,
Meeting his foe alone.

Gaily advancing, with never a thought
Save for the victory bloodily bought,
Many 's the underground battle he 's fought
All on his very own.

Licking his scars when it 's over and done,
Little he cares for the praises he 's won,
Only the second whip's ' Good little son,'
Meets with a fleeting sigh.

Homeward with hounds he limps gamely along,
Keeping the place he has earned in the throng,
Just on the level of whip-lash and thong,
Under the huntsman's eye.

FAREWELL TO AN OLD FAVOURITE

WHEN I saw you go I could hardly speak
For the anguish clutching my wretched heart,
And I cursed the fate which could rudely seek
To ordain that we, you and I, must part
After all the seasons you 'd carried me,
And the joys and sorrows we 'd gaily shared
In the hunting-field, which shall always be
A most fragrant memory, unimpaired
By the passing years or the hand of Time.
But the only thing that can comfort me,
When I 'm far away in some foreign clime,
Is the thought that now you will surely be
As content, no doubt, as in olden days,
For the home you 've gone to is good, I know,
And you 'll still be riding the same old ways,
And again be hearing that tally-ho
Which we 've often galloped to, you and I,
And the crash of music which quickly swells
When the pack 's away with its stirring cry
That awakes the echoes, like chiming bells.

60 FAREWELL TO AN OLD FAVOURITE

But I hope, sometimes, you will think of me,
And remember days which we both enjoyed,
For there 're no wide grass-lands where I shall be,
Only dust and stones and a glaring void.

At some future time we may hunt again,
Although no one knows what the fates may send ;
But we 'll go on hoping, and so, till then,
I must say ' Good-bye and good luck, old friend.'

THE CAST

THE Master stopped with his hand upheld,
Curtly showing the way was barred,
And, standing up in his stirrups, yelled,
' Hold hard, gentlemen, *please* hold hard.'

The pack had checked on the dusty plough,
Mutely quartering to and fro,
For scent had failed, as it will, somehow,
Just when every one 's out to go.

With ' Wind him, Quarryman, wind him, try,
' Yuip, my beauties,' the Master cheered,
And watched each hound with his eagle eye
Ere he skilfully interfered.

A few short blasts on his horn, and then
Off he raced to the field beyond,
And shouting, ' Put them to me, Ben,'
Jumped the fence by the cattle-pond.

A moment later the pack surged through,
Blindly trusting his lightning cast,
And hurled themselves to their work anew,
Sure success would be theirs at last.

A sudden whimper that stopped in doubt ;
Then another, more business-like ;
A deep-tongued note and a stirring shout,
' Huic to Quarryman, huic, huic, huic.'



'WARE WIRE

We saw him sail up to the bank, like a swallow,
And reach to the top with an effortless spring,
And steadied our horses, preparing to follow
His lead, when occurred a remarkable thing,
For, just as he seemed to be strongly collected
And perfectly balanced, both he and his horse,
He suddenly swerved in the most unexpected
And awkward endeavour to alter his course.

We barely had room to pull up in a hurry,
In order to see what the fuss was about,
Ere, turning quite calmly and without any flurry,
He brandished his crop, with a vehement shout ;
And wrenching our horses round short of the double,
We heard him proclaim, in a voice full of ire,
Since nothing could possibly save him from trouble,
'Go round by the gate. Stop the others. 'Ware
wire.'

THE HIRELING

I WONDER what his story is
And why he should be living
This unromantic life of his,
With all its vague uncertainties
Which fill one with misgiving.

For, by his looks, he ought to grace
Some private stable, plainly ;
He seems to have a turn of pace
And might, perhaps, pick up a race,
If treated more humanely.

But every hunting day, instead,
He 's out, or very nearly,
With some one pulling at his head,
Or bumping like a lump of lead
About his saddle, queerly.

It rarely seems to be his lot
To carry good performers,
Or even ones who know a jot
About the things to do, or not,
Out hunting, as conformers.

However, there 's a fly, I 'm told,
In every jar of ointment,
And, though he looks as good as gold,
They say he fairly catches hold,
To arms' and wrists' disjointment !

A FAST THING

ONE bitter day in early March
We met beneath the railway arch,
And hardly dared expect to find
In such a cold and biting wind,
Which blew direct from snow-clad hills
And swept the vale with icy chills.

But, strange to say, we found a fox
Beyond the disused signal-box ;
And, bearing left, he set his mask
For Barton Head ; and who would ask
To choose a better line than this ?—
A hunting man's idea of bliss.

And, stranger still, it seemed that scent
Was burning hot, as off we went,
All bunched together, side by side,
And frankly settled down to ride
To try and get the foremost place,
Regardless of the reckless pace.

For hounds were going like the wind,
Which meant that we who came behind
Must go as well to keep in touch
And chance our fences over-much ;
Which, doubtless, sounds a little rash,
But most were out to cut a dash.

And after twenty minutes, dead,
With all the thrusters well ahead,
The pack threw up, by Hunters' Leap,
Beside a huddled flock of sheep.
A check was welcome, more or less,
As some were showing slight distress.

It also gave a chance, no doubt,
To those unlucky ones thrown out
And helped them get on terms again.
But hardly had they joined us when
From just beyond, by Windmill Hill,
There came a holloa, loud and shrill.

And off we went like fun once more,
The pack careering on before,
With crash of glorious music hurled
Through all that stark and wintry world,
Which echoed back its harmony
And thrilled us with ecstatic glee.

For now we 'd got our second wind
And weren't so very far behind
The racing pack, a field at most,
And so, perhaps with luck, could boast,
As long as we remained in front,
That this was no uncertain hunt.

It was, indeed, the fastest thing
Which fate, that season, deigned to bring
Our way, although we 'd had some runs
Which people voted record ones ;
But none of them could quite compare
With this for speed, we all declare.

'Twas no ' quick thing ' we 'd like to add,
For forty minutes more we had
Before we killed near Barton Row,
With only fifteen up, or so,
Who owned to being really ' done '
By this, the season's greatest run.

For Reynard's point was seven miles
At least, a fact which reconciles,
Three more, perhaps, the way hounds ran ;
And so it proves we never can
Attempt to prophesy a thing
The most unlikely day may bring.

BEGINNING OF THE END

DAYS with the March winds blowing
Lustily through the trees
Warn us the season's going
More than too fast to please ;
Only a month availing,
Just a few days, alas,
Still to go gaily sailing
Over the English grass.

Soon must we say good-bye to
All the familiar things,
Turn, with a mournful sigh, to
Spring and the void it brings ;
Wistfully now we follow
Hounds and the horn's sweet blast,
Treasuring each huic-holloa
Lest it should be the last.

THE PROMISE

HUNTING, they say, dies a natural death,
As the days grow slowly long ;
Is there a spell in the violet's breath,
Or a charm in the cuckoo's song ?

Whether or not, there 's a promise, we know,
In the Springtime which cheers us on,
Helping, a little, to soften the blow
Of *another* good season gone.

